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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/723,715	11/25/2003	Tetsuya Ishikawa	03706/LH	9794

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EXAMINER	
PHAM, THIERRY L	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/723,715	ISHIKAWA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	THIERRY L. PHAM	2625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *01 February 2008*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *14-17* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *14-17* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

- This action is responsive to the following communication: an amendment filed on 2/1/08.
- Claims 14-17 are currently pending and wherein claims 14-17 are newly added; claims 1-13 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka (US 20020003897), and in view of Stevens et al (US 20040021893).

Regarding claim 14, Tanaka discloses a system (image processing system, figs. 16-17) comprising:

- an image-processing apparatus (digital copy machine 100, fig. 1) which is coupled to a network (communication interface 15 is implemented to connect to network 200 as shown in fig. 17), and each of which includes a rasterizer (rasterizer 9, fig. 1) to conduct a rasterizing operation for rasterizing image data that represents an image and for outputting the rasterized image data; and
- an image-printing apparatus (printer 220, fig. 17) coupled to the network, which is coupled to an image-processing apparatus through the network, and which includes an image-forming section (inherently, printer 220 includes a print engine for forming images onto print media) which forms a reproduced image on a sheet, wherein an image-processing apparatus is capable of performing the rasterizing operation (rasterizer 9, fig. 1) in response to a request by an second image-processing apparatus, and wherein image processing apparatus further includes a storage section (memory 13, fig. 1) to store image data.

However, Tanaka fails to teach and/or suggest an imaging system comprising plurality of image processing apparatuses, and wherein the plurality of image-processing apparatuses are divided into a plurality of groups, each of which includes at least one of the image-processing apparatuses, wherein the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group comprises a storage section to store access restriction information for specifying the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested. In other words, Tanaka's system only teaches a single copy machine 100 and a single printer 220 that are connected to the network rather than plurality of printers and copiers are connected to the network, and wherein these networked devices are divided into groups.

Stevens, in the same field of endeavor for printing, teaches a printing system (fig. 1) having plurality of image processing apparatuses (fig. 1), and wherein and wherein the plurality of image-processing apparatuses are divided into a plurality of groups (divided into plurality of groups, first group and second group, fig. 2A-2B), each of which includes at least one of the image-processing apparatuses (e.g. image processing apparatus 206 in first group, fig. 2A), wherein the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group comprises a storage section (each image processing apparatus include a storage device to storage document 140, par. 51) to store access restriction information (printer's storage also stores access restriction, figs. 4-5, par. 46 & 51-53) for specifying the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify network of Tanaka to allow plurality of printers, copiers (image processing apparatuses), host computers, scanners, and a group section to connect to a single network as taught by Stevens that enables users/operators to select different and/or substitute device if the selected device has been jammed or failed to operate; to classify and/or separate printers into groups allows users/operators to identify the selected printers and/or group of printers more efficient. For example, grouping all color printers into one group, monochrome printers into another group, and etc (pars. 24-30 of Stevens), helps to improve the printing system's organization (e.g. color print jobs will be routed to grouped color printers).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Tanaka with Stevens to obtain the invention as specified in claim 14.

Regarding claim 15, Stevens further teaches the system of claim 14, wherein the image-printing apparatus belongs to one of the plurality of groups, and the image-printing apparatus comprises a storage section to store the access restriction information (printer's storage also stores access restriction, figs. 4-5) of the at least one image-processing apparatus belonging to the same group as the image-printing apparatus.

Regarding claim 16, Tanaka discloses a system comprising:image-processing apparatus (digital copy machine 100, fig. 1) which is coupled to a network (communication interface 15 is implemented to connect to network 200 as shown in fig. 17), and each of which includes a rasterizer (rasterizer 9, fig. 1) to conduct a rasterizing operation for rasterizing image data that represents an image and for outputting the rasterized image data; an image-printing apparatus (printer 220, fig. 17) coupled to the network, which is coupled to the image-processing apparatus through the network, and which includes an image-forming section (inherently, printer 220 includes a print engine for forming images onto print media) which forms a reproduced image on a sheet; and a server (server 500, fig. 20) that is coupled to the network, and wherein an image-processing apparatus is capable of performing the rasterizing operation (rasterizer 9, fig. 1) in response to a request by an second image-processing apparatus, and wherein image processing apparatus further includes a storage section (memory 13, fig. 1) to store image data.

However, Tanaka fails to teach and/or suggest an imaging system comprising plurality of image processing apparatuses, and wherein the plurality of image-processing apparatuses are divided into a plurality of groups, each of which includes at least one of the image-processing apparatuses, wherein the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group comprises a storage section to store access restriction information for specifying the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested. In other words, Tanaka's system only teaches a single copy machine 100 and a single printer 220 that are connected to the network rather than

plurality of printers and copiers are connected to the network, and wherein these networked devices are divided into groups.

Stevens, in the same field of endeavor for printing, teaches a printing system (fig. 1) having plurality of image processing apparatuses (fig. 1), and wherein and wherein the plurality of image-processing apparatuses are divided into a plurality of groups (divided into plurality of groups, first group and second group, fig. 2A-2B), each of which includes at least one of the image-processing apparatuses (e.g. image processing apparatus 206 in first group, fig. 2A), wherein the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group comprises a storage section (each image processing apparatus include a storage device to storage document 140, par. 51) to store access restriction information (printer's storage also stores access restriction, figs. 4-5) for specifying the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify network of Tanaka to allow plurality of printers, copiers (image processing apparatuses), host computers, scanners, and a group section to connect to a single network as taught by Stevens that enables users/operators to select different and/or substitute device if the selected device has been jammed or failed to operate; to classify and/or separate printers into groups allows users/operators to identify the selected printers and/or group of printers more efficient. For example, grouping all color printers into one group, monochrome printers into another group, and etc, helps to improve the printing system's organization (e.g. color print jobs will be routed to grouped color printers).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Tanaka with Stevens to obtain the invention as specified in claim 16.

Regarding claim 17, Stevens further teaches the system of claim 16, wherein the image-printing apparatus (fig. 2A) belongs to one of the plurality of groups.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 14-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection using newly found prior art reference due to newly added claims (claims 14-17).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to THIERRY L. PHAM whose telephone number is (571)272-7439. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:30 AM - 6:00 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David K. Moore can be reached on (571)272-7437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Thierry L. Pham

/Edward L. Coles/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2625